



AMENDED CLAIM

42. (Amended) A component of an electronic parking meter system, comprising:

an inductive loop vehicle detection sensor located to detect both the physical presence or absence of a vehicle in said parking space and emitting a respective signal indicative thereof; the inductive loop comprising a winding of several loops wound one on top of the other; means for securing the several loops to preserve the axial orientation of the winding and maintain the signal output from the winding; the winding being embedded in the parking space; and the respective ends of the winding being twisted with respect to one another to reduce the electric field effects of the winding;

an electric parking meter for determining the time a parking space associated with the electronic parking meter is occupied by a vehicle and receiving coins denoting desired parking time and indicating said time; [[and]]

a microprocessor controller coupled to the sensor and the electronic parking meter and receiving the respective signal from said inductive loop and indicative of the presence or absence of a vehicle for selectively controlling the electronic parking meter ; and

said detection sensor includes a variable oscillator circuit oscillating at a base frequency and responsive to the inductance of the inductive loop for indicating the presence or absence of a vehicle in the parking space;

said microprocessor controller including a crystal oscillator operating at approximately 50 times the base frequency of the variable oscillator circuit and providing a signal including the crystal oscillator for controlling the variable oscillator circuit;

the presence or absence of a vehicle in the parking space causing a respective decrease or increase in the inductance of the inductive loop and a respective commensurate increase or decrease in the operating frequency and a respective decrease or increase in the period of the variable oscillator circuit, thereby decreasing or increasing the number of crystal oscillator pulses in each period of the variable oscillator circuit;

said oscillator providing an output signal including said crystal oscillator pulses to said microprocessor controller; and

said microprocessor controller counting the number of pulses in a given cycle of operation of the variable oscillator circuit to determine the presence or absence of a vehicle in the parking space.